

In the claims:

1. A method of providing for weight-based determinations of one or more articles to be shipped; the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) initiating a ratecost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node via the Internet;
- (b) entering a code or a description of each one of said one or more articles into a first data field of said routine;
- (c) transmitting a query from said routine based upon the code or description to a database containing product codes and/or descriptions for one or more articles, a product code or a description for packing material, and a product code or description for the container and the sealing material for the container that the one or more articles and the packing material that are going to be shipped located at a second node for a weight associated with said each one of said one or more articles, container packing materials and sealing materials;
- (d) returning said weight to said cost routine for use in calculating a cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles, said packing material, and said container ~~to a particular destination; and~~
- (e) displaying the cost to ship the articles, container, packing material and sealing material ~~entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application as an input parameter; and~~
- (f) ~~determining said rate for shipping said each of said one or more articles to said particular destination based upon a set of one or more input parameters.~~

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said first node is remote to said database.

25. A method of returning a weight from a weight field of a database wherein said database has at least one data field for storing a set of data relative to a corresponding article, packing material, and container, and wherein said set of data comprises at least said weight field, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) initiating a ratecost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node;

(b) entering a description of said corresponding article, said packing material, and said container into a first data field of said rate determining routine;

(c) transmitting a query from said routine to said database for a weight associated with said corresponding article, said packing material, and said container;

(d) returning said weight to said routine; and

(e) displaying the cost to ship the article, packing material and container. ~~entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application; and~~

~~(f) determining a cost for shipping said corresponding article to a particular destination.~~

26. A system for determining the weight of an article, packing material, and container to be shipped, said system comprising:

(a) a data processing system located at a first node, said data processing system further comprising a shipping system application, said shipping system application further comprising ratecost determining means for determining a carrier cost to be charged for shipping of said article, said packing material, and said container;

(b) first data entry means for entering a product code of said article, a product code of said packing material, and a product code of said container into a first data field of said shipping system application;

(c) transmission means for transmitting a query for a weight associated with said article, said packing material, and said container, from said shipping system application to a database located at a second node and then returning said weight to said application for use by said rate determining means;

(d) second data entry means for entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application as an input parameter; and

(e) calculating means within said ratecost determining means for calculating said cost for shipping said article, said packing material, and said container to said particular destination based upon a set of one or more input parameters.

40. A method of providing for weight-based determinations of one or more articles to be shipped, the method comprising the steps of:

a) initiating a cost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node;

b) entering a code or a description of each one of said one or more articles into a first data field of said routine;

c) entering a code or a description of the container in which the articles are going to be shipped;

d) transmitting a query from said routine to a database located at a second node for a weight associated with said each one of said one or more articles and said container;

e) returning said weight to said routine for use in calculating a cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles and said container;

f) entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application as an input parameter; and

g) determining said cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles and container based upon a set of one or more input parameters.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein said initiation of said routine is via Internet or modem and where said initiating site is remote to said database.

42. The method of claim 40 wherein said initiation of said routine occurs at a data processing system co-located with said application and said database.

43. The method of claim 40, wherein said database further comprises a set of codes (such as UPC or EAN) data.

44. The method of claim 40, wherein said database further comprises a set of data comprising a recorded weight associated with a set of one or more articles wherein said recorded weight is entered by a system operator.

45. The method of claim 40, further including the steps of:
entering a code or a description of the packing material that is included in the container to be shipped; and
determining the cost for shipping the packing material.

46. The method claimed in claim 45, further including the steps of determining the weight of the packing material using the volume of the container minus the volumes of the articles in the container multiplied by the density of the packing material.

47. The method of claim 40, further including the steps of:
storing the cost for shipping each one or more articles and the container in a completed container data base at the second node;
submitting said container to a carrier for acceptance; and
determining by the carrier the cost to ship said container.

48. The method of claim 47, further including the step of:
isolating the containers that do not have the proper postage.

49. The method of claim 48, further including the step of:
billing mailers who have not paid sufficient funds to ship said
container.

50. The method of claim 48, further including the step of:
refunding monies to mailers who have overpaid to ship said
container.

51. The method claimed in claim 47, further including the steps of:
comparing the stored weight for shipping the article and container in the
completed container database with the weight determined by the carrier to ship the
container; and
querying the manufacturer of the articles and containers concerning their
actual weight if the compared total weights are not the same.

52. The method claimed in claim 51, further including the step of:

updating the weights associated with each one or more articles and said container at the database located at the second node.

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